

the same time, though, white political leaders paid them lip service in order to gain black votes but were otherwise indifferent to their needs, and Kansas's black population was not large enough to press effectively for real change. The units' commanding officers often had questionable personal histories that prevented them from serving in white units or the regular army. They received inferior weapons and equipment, in part because the state did not intend to ever use them for serious purposes; the use of the Garfield Rifles to help put down an 1894 coal miners' strike was a rare exception. They were also prevented from joining together in a separate battalion, and when the Spanish-American War broke out, they were initially barred from enlisting, although former black militiamen eventually did form a regiment; one of its members was John Lewis Waller Jr., son and namesake of the former Cedar Rapids resident and noted political leader.

Cunningham has written an excellent synopsis of Kansas's black militias, making effective use of the limited available primary sources to describe this often overlooked aspect of black military history. The book also convincingly shows how these militia units were politicized by white politicians, the members themselves, and the communities that supported them. The analysis could have been strengthened by more historical contextualization, which Cunningham largely limits to national military events and comparisons with black units in other states. His description of the Garfield Rifles' involvement in the 1894 strike, for example, would have benefitted from looking broadly at the ways that class, race, and military power intersected during that era of labor unrest. Overall, though, *The Black Citizen-Soldiers of Kansas* is an informative read for scholars of African American military history and militia history in general.

*Love in an Envelope: A Courtship in the American West*, edited by Daniel Tyler with Betty Henshaw. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008. xxxiii, 210 pp. Map, illustrations, family genealogies, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer Jane Simonsen is assistant professor of history and gender and women's studies at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. She is the author of *Making Home Work: Domesticity and Native American Assimilation in the American West, 1860–1919* (2006).

In an age when lovers might Twitter their thoughts to one another (and the world) instantaneously, Daniel Tyler and Betty Henshaw offer a compilation of letters between nineteenth-century sweethearts that, in spite of what could be lengthy delivery delays, relay the character of

an unbroken conversation between young people preparing for marriage. Although Martha Bennett was a mere 17 when she began her epistolary courtship with Leroy Carpenter, her letters (and his) reveal mature ideas about wage work, the challenge of resettlement, and the practical realities of marriage.

In the spring of 1871 Carpenter left Tipton, Iowa, with his parents for the pro-temperance Union Colony in Greeley, Colorado. Before leaving, he wrote his first letter to Bennett, whom he had met through relatives. Bennett was a "little school marm" from De Witt who returned Carpenter's growing confidences in kind. The letters trace Carpenter's endeavors in Greeley — digging irrigation ditches, building a home, clearing snow off railroads — while also charting the progress of their courtship. As months pass, discussions of marital expectations and future homemaking plans mingle more frequently with updates about weather and illness. The letters end with Carpenter's impending trip back to Iowa for their marriage in April 1872.

Tyler and Henshaw's introduction, conclusion, and informative footnotes highlight the context of love and marriage in nineteenth-century Iowa and Colorado (separate spheres, marital property laws, courtship conventions) and clarify the circumstances in which the pair lived (agricultural practices, community history, illness, family). Martha knew that her role would be primarily as housekeeper, but as a future farm wife, she offered to hunt, ride a hay wagon, and help Leroy dig ditches, while Roy assured her that "you own as much of *our* little property as I do" (142). While their words often have the tone of gentle jesting, they also seem to be testing one another on their ideas about women's rights, gender roles, and popular but shallow ideas about romantic love. Their relationship is intriguing for its largely secular character — aside from one discourse on God's grace on Martha's part — and for the secrecy in which they kept their betrothal from their communities. Likewise pertinent is the historical role of writing itself: more than once the couple frets about delays and confusion in receiving letters (a confusion that is transferred to the modern reader, as letters are arranged by date of writing, not reception), about having to write and read in front of others at home, and the difficulties of writing at the end of a tiring day — "the ruling on this paper is so faint that I am going to write just as it comes," apologizes Martha (112).

A well-edited collection should leave room for other scholars to work with the material, and, indeed, as with many compilations of private writing, there is much more to be mined from this correspondence. The editors situate Carpenter's work in the context of the growing Union Colony and settlement in the West, but less is said about

Bennett's equally interesting movements around De Witt. Her notes on unruly pupils, unequal pay, and the attentions of would-be suitors provide fascinating details of a working woman's life in Iowa. Carpenter's and Bennett's dedication to temperance and other community reform organizations provides insight into what drew both men and women to those causes. Finally, the letters suggest both the trials of pioneering and the ties that still bound migrants tightly to home communities. The interpretation provided by Tyler and Henshaw is just one of many frameworks for reading this set of engaging letters.

*Bright Epoch: Women and Coeducation in the American West*, by Andrea G. Radke-Moss. Women in the West Series. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008. xii, 352 pp. Illustrations, tables, graphs, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth.

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Andrea G. Radke-Moss opens *Bright Epoch* with the story of Adonijah Strong Welch's inauguration as the first president of Iowa Agricultural College in Ames in 1869. His speech focused on "two great and salutary educational reforms": the inclusion of "branches of natural science" and the "free admission of young women, on equal terms with young men, to all the privileges and honors which the institution can bestow" (3). The book explores the results of the latter reform — "the practices of coeducation at land-grant colleges" (1) — specifically at the Ames institution (which became Iowa State University), the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Oregon Agricultural College in Corvallis, and Utah Agricultural College in Logan. Between 1870 and 1900, Radke-Moss argues, these colleges "accepted women's intellectual equality, at least in general, but they nevertheless struggled to work out the actual practices of mixing the sexes. . . . Out of this interplay between separation and inclusion, women students succeeded in negotiating new spaces of gendered inclusion and equality at land-grant colleges" (2). Thus, this period "might be considered a 'bright epoch' for gender inclusion during the history of coeducational practice" (289).

Student experiences and perspectives are Radke-Moss's primary focus; her main source materials are literary society minutes, yearbooks, student newspapers, and diaries, as well as course catalogs. Institutional policies and leaders fade into the background as she de-